



Horses, buggies and fine old clothes bring back the past in "carriage marathon" of Genesee Country Village, N.Y.

BACK TO THE BUGGY

Story and photos by Leland Brun

In early September, pleasant sounds of yesteryear—horses' hoofs and squeaking carriages—echo through an antique village in Upstate New York.

Against a spectacular backdrop of turning leaves, the "carriage marathon" of Genesee Country Village re-creates, for a day, a bit of America's horse-and-buggy past.

Carriages are paraded by their owners for judging. But for the hundreds of spectators, the delight of the day is simply seeing the relics—and getting a glimpse of how life used to be lived in the New York countryside.

Contestants, many of them older persons, are dressed in authentic attire of the 18th and 19th centuries. Entries are judged on the condition of rigs, dress of occupants, and how well horses and drivers handle obstacles. This year's show is set for September 8.

The picturesque hamlet is a collection of authentic old houses,

stores, shops, churches and other buildings dismantled in nearby counties and reconstructed on a 125-acre site.

It was created by John L. Wehle whose family fortune was made in beer (Genesee). Wehle, concerned about the continual loss of historically significant buildings, spent 10 years building the village. It is now a nonprofit educational institution.

Nearby, Wehle established the Gallery of Sporting Art containing about 350 art works of wildlife, hunting, fishing and landscape, and the Carriage Museum, a collection of some 40 horse-drawn vehicles and accessories.

The village, 20 miles south of Rochester off State Route 5, is open from May to October. A Revolutionary War pageant is held in June.

But for one day near the close of summer, center stage is occupied by horses and buggies—and people who love the past. □





BIG SHOWOFF

As an old French saying has it, "the more things change, the more they remain the same." We'd have a hard time today finding a scene like the one above. And yet, as we look at it, we all understand what's going on. Human behavior, in other words, never changes, however much the world in which we live may change. Available research doesn't reveal how much young boys are given these days to skipping stones across a pond. We suspect that enough are engaged in that fine art to ensure that new generations will cotton to it as well. Certainly, whether we have skipped stones across water in earlier days or not, we know that the boy in our picture isn't just skipping stones. He is showing off. And why not? At his side, he enjoys an audience done up ever so prettily in pert pigtailed and dainty dress. Miss Pigtailed has a stance that says she's willing to pretend she's impressed. In today's world, where sexist role-playing is under attack, such fawning attention may be frowned on. But while the sociologists debate the pros and cons of the matter, we can all enjoy the subtleties of human nature that the scene reveals. More than that, we can enjoy the charming rural

setting that many of us remember from our childhood. For that, as for the scene's human interest, we can give thanks to a man who has made a retirement career of re-evoking his own rural childhood memories. He is Paul Detlefsen of San Diego, who soon will be celebrating his 80th birthday. A veteran of Hollywood, where he worked for 30 years as a special-effects-artist, film technician and innovator in the movie industry, Detlefsen decided at age 50 to try his hand as a calendar artist. His first painting, "The Good Old Days," scored an immediate success and was topped in popularity only by Norman Rockwell's Boy Scout calendar. Today, Detlefsen still paints calendar art in the same nostalgic style for the William F. Vernon Company of Newton, Iowa. It's a style longtime MODERN MATURITY readers probably remember from a selection of his paintings that appeared in the June-July 1971 issue. Born and raised in Chicago, Detlefsen came by his memories of rural America in the early 20th century when his father took the family into the "north country" in Wisconsin for 10 weeks every summer. To Detlefsen—and his father—we are ever grateful. □